

Comments on Feb. 14, 2013 Zoning Administrator Agenda

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Item B. Minutes for the January 24, 2013 Regular Hearing

On page 2:

line 3: "...an additional condition of approval requiring ~~the~~ limiting the illumination of the new monument sign ..."

line 5: following "The Zoning Administrator opened the public hearing."

Although the draft minutes identify the members of the public who spoke, they fail to make clear that the applicant for Item No. 2 was The Irvine Company and that Shawna Schaffner of CAA Planning Consultants (?) was present representing them.

I believe that prior to Ms. Mallar speaking, the Zoning Administrator asked Ms. Schaffner if she wanted to say anything on behalf of the applicant, but she declined. However she *did* speak later, and without identification of her as the spokesperson, statements such as "...and applicant agreed, ..." and "...with concurrence of the applicant, ..." lack clarity.

Item C.1. Island Hotel Sign Program (PA2012-174)

Under "Subject" in the title block of the staff report: "Permit No. MD~~2011~~2012-018"

In the draft resolution:

In the heading material: "THE ~~PLANNING COMMISSION~~ ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH HEREBY FINDS..."

Section 1.2: "The applicant requests a Modification Permit to amend the Comprehensive Sign Program to allow the renovation of six existing wall signs to exceed the maximum height and area permitted by the Zoning Code for a comprehensive sign program (more than a 20% increase in height and 30% increase in area). Each sign proposes a total combined area of 545-square-feet including the added logo upon the Newport Center Drive and Santa Cruz Drive building elevations."

I find less than clear the description of what is allowed by the current Comprehensive Sign Program, what is wrong with that, and what is proposed. Is the language intended to suggest the proposed signs are larger than the Zoning Code allows even with a Sign Program? and is this a proposal to *amend* the existing Sign Program, or to seek a deviation from it?

Section 1.5: "... and considered by, the ~~Planning Commission~~ Zoning Administrator at this meeting."

Section 3.C.1. *"The Island Hotel is located in Block 600 of Newport Center among several existing high-rise and multi-story buildings making visibility of the site location and identification more difficult for the general public."*

I don't entirely buy this premise. The Island Hotel has a distinctive architecture that distinguishes it from the nearby office towers.

Section 3.D.1. *"The existing wall signs on two building façades have been at their location since the development of the hotel site in 1991 and there has been no history of detriment to the neighborhood."*

This begs the question of why signs that have been adequate for 22 years are no longer adequate.

Section 3.E.2. *"The location of the wall signs on the two building facades of the existing hotel does not affect views or impact the surrounding area since they are located on the existing building."*

However they are mounted, large signs can be visually intrusive and *do* impact the surrounding area.

Section 4.1. *"The Zoning Administrator of the City of Newport Beach hereby approves PA2012-174 for Modification Permit No. MD2012-018 to amend a portion of Comprehensive Sign Program No. CS2006-001, subject to the conditions set forth in Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.."*

If CS2006-001 is being amended, it would seem a copy of the amended sections needs to be provided. I am unable to find any reference in the resolution to where the amendments can be found. I see a "Revised Sign Program" provided as Attachment ZA 3 in the staff report, but it is not identified as CS2006-001, and its relation to the draft resolution, and to the former CS2006-001, is unclear. Is Attachment ZA 3 an amendment to a portion of the existing CS2006-001 (as the resolution suggests), or a replacement for the entirety of CS2006-001?

Regarding Attachment ZA 3:

Page 2: The lack of written explanation makes the intent and content of the proposed Comprehensive Sign Program unclear: page 2 seems to specify a total of 3 signs, which I find difficult to reconcile with the six signs mentioned in the resolution. The attachment also leaves unclear how this proposal differs from the existing program.

Page 3: Again, without any written explanation, the significance of the provided diagram is unclear. Are these suggested sign locations? Or the only allowable locations?

Page 4A: I am disappointed the Monument Sign, as proposed, does not include the site address. Also, page 2 of the staff report suggests the original permission allowed two ground level building identification signs. Is the intent now that only one be allowed?

For purposes of this hearing, I think it would have been helpful to provide before and after pictures, portraying what the signs look like now for comparison with the proposal.